

## Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 AID-05 IGA-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /068 W

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R 241640Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8867

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, TS

SUBJECT: NOUIRA VISIT: PRESS CONFERENCE FORESHADOW'S PRIME  
MINISTER'S INTERESTS

1. SUMMARY: PRIMIN NOUIRA GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE  
APRIL 22 DEALING WITH HIS COMING VISIT TO US. HE  
DECLINED CHARACTERIZE VISIT AS PRIMARILY TO ENCOURAGE  
PRIVATE AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN TUNISIA AND GAVE INDICA-  
TION HE WILL WANT TO DISCUSS MIDDLE EAST SITUATION  
AND TUNISIAN CONCERNS RE MEDITERRANEAN AREA GENERALLY.  
IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION HE SAID U.S. AID HAS DECLINED  
SHARPLY, BUT HE REFUSED TO COMMENT ON WHY. IN EXPLANA-  
TION OF BOURGUIBA'S NOT VISITING CHINA AND U.S. NOUIRA  
SAID, FOR FIRST TIME IN PRESENCE OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIA  
REPS, THAT PRESIDENT IS TIRED AND CANNOT TOLERATE  
CROSSING SO MANY TIME ZONES. END SUMMARY.

2. AT BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL 22 CALLED TO  
DISCUSS HIS COMING VISIT TO U.S., PRIMIN NOUIRA WAS  
ASKED ABOUT PAST AND FUTURE US AID TO TUNISIA. NOUIRA  
SAID US HAD PROVIDED AID WORTH 337 MILLION DINARS  
BETWEEN 1956 AND 1973. LEVEL HAD THEN DECLINED, WITH  
ONLY 5.5 MILLION DOLLARS GIVEN IN FY 1973-74 AND NONE,  
UP TO NOW, IN FY 1974-75. IN FUTURE, HE SAID, US MAY  
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PARTICIPATE IN HELPING FINANCE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

PLAN AND COMING FIVE-YEAR PLAN, IN SUCH SECTORS AS INFRASTRUCTURE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE. TUNISIA HAS ARRIVED AT A POINT WHERE IT NEEDS THE HELP OF ALL ITS FRIENDS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC TAKE-OFF, NOUIRA ADDED. HE REFUSED TO ANSWER A REQUEST TO COMMENT ON WHY THERE HAD BEEN A DECLINE IN US AID LEVELS.

3. PRIMIN WAS ASKED ABOUT PRIVATE AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN TUNISIA, A TYPE OF US/TUNISIAN COOPERATION WHICH HAD BEEN GROWING VERY SLOWLY, AND WHETHER PRIMIN SAW HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON AS LEADING TO MORE PROGRESS IN THIS RESPECT. NOUIRA REPLIED THAT HE IS NOT GOING TO U.S. "AS A COMMERCIAL AGENT OR CANVASSER. MY VISIT IS ONE OF FRIENDSHIP, ON THE VERY CORDIAL INVITATION OF PRESIDENT FORD. WE WILL DISCUSS PROBLEMS OF INTEREST TO THE TWO COUNTRIES. ACCORDINGLY I AM NOT A MERCHANT OF PROJECTS."

4. NOUIRA WAS ASKED ABOUT PROBLEMS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN USG AND GOT, WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST POLICY. HE REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT TUNISIA, LIKE MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, IS A MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRY. A THREAT TO THE PEACE ANYWHERE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AFFECTS TUNISIA, AND THUS TUNISIA'S BILATERAL RELATIONS INVOLVE MIDDLE EAST AND MEDITERRANEAN PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT U.S. EFFORTS FOR A COMPROMISE SOLUTION AMONG THE PARTIES CONCERNED IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE PRAISE-WORTHY EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE NOT FOR THE MOMENT SUCCEEDED.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE AMERICAN POSITION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA, NOUIRA SAID, "THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. THERE IS NO NEED FOR COMMENT."

6. BOURGUIBA'S HEALTH: NOUIRA WAS ASKED WHETHER HIS STATE VISIT TO THE U.S. MEANT THAT BOURGUIBA HIMSELF WOULD NOT BE GOING, OR WHETHER THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT IS ONLY POSTPONED. NOUIRA REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT IS TIRED, AND UNABLE TO TOLERATE THE CHANGE IN TIME ZONES. THIS, HE SAID, IS WHY BOURGUIBA DID NOT GO TO

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CHINA AND WHY HE UNFORTUNATELY WAS NOT GOING TO WASHINGTON. HOWEVER THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE "DID NOT SEE THE RELEVANCE" OF A FOLLOW-ON QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THIS MEANT BOURGUIBA WOULD NOT BE GOING TO MOSCOW AS SCHEDULO;+;W.H%5FP"1\_0@CU5US.Q+G

-<G"DT!K7D(W9Q9FD.F -/QDWQSH8RT#JD!P>

X

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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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